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ACTION: SCT-03

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INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 INR-05 SS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSCE-00  
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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1877  
INFO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA IMMEDIATE

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Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.  
☒ Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny ☒ Declassify  
Date 2/27/02 Exemption \_\_\_\_\_

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PTER, HO, NU, US  
SUBJECT: GON RESPONDS TO DEMARCHE ON POSSIBLE  
- TERRORIST ATTACKS IN HONDURAS

REF: A) MANAGUA 572  
- B) STATE 34538

1. ~~SECRET~~ - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: CHARGE WAS CALLED TO FOREIGN MINISTRY MORNING OF FEBRUARY 6 TO RECEIVE THE GOVERNMENT OF NICARAGUA'S (GON) REPLY TO EMBASSY DEMARCHE ON POSSIBLE HONDURAN TERRORIST ATTACKS, PER REFTELS. FOREIGN MINISTER D'ESCOTO HANDED CHARGE A FOUR PARAGRAPH AIDE MEMOIRE WHICH REJECTED THE U.S. "THREAT" THAT THE GON WOULD SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY HONDURAN TERRORIST ATTACKS, AND EXPRESSED CONCERN INSTEAD OVER POSSIBLE CONTRA ATTACKS AGAINST THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. THE AIDE MEMOIRE ALSO DENIED ANY GON SUPPORT FOR "HONDURAN TERRORIST GROUPS," BUT PROPOSED A MEETING BETWEEN U.S. AND GON OFFICIALS TO EXAMINE U.S. CONCERNS AND CONSIDER HOW THE GON COULD HELP. CHARGE SUGGESTED STRONGLY THAT THE GON SHOULD WARN THE TERRORISTS OFF.

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D'ESCOTO MADE A VAGUE UNDERTAKING TO DO SO. D'ESCOTO ALL THE WHILE, HOWEVER, DENIED ANY GON CONNECTION TO EITHER THE CHINCHONEROS OR OTHER HONDURAN GROUPS. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS WE NOT ENGAGE GON OFFICIALS IN DISCUSSIONS OF THE POSSIBLE THREAT TO OUR PERSONNEL IN HONDURAS, BUT SIMPLY REPEAT OUR REQUEST THAT THEY WARN OFF THE TERRORISTS. END SUMMARY.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER MIGUEL D'ESCOTO, ALONG WITH VICE MINISTER VICTOR HUGO TINOCO, NORTH AMERICA DIRECTOR MANUEL CORDERO AND NORTH AMERICA DESK OFFICER ROBERTO VARGAS, RECEIVED CHARGE AND ADCM IN HIS OFFICE FEBRUARY 6. D'ESCOTO HANDED CHARGE AN AIDE-MEMOIRE

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REPLYING TO EMBASSY'NON-PAPER PER REFTELS. THE AIDE MEMOIRE SAID:

-- THE GON CATEGORICALLY REJECTS THE "THREAT" CONTAINED IN THE NON-PAPER FROM THE U.S. WHICH ATTEMPTS TO MAKE THE GON CO-RESPONSIBLE FOR REPORTED PLANS TO ATTACK CONTRA INSTALLATIONS (SIC) AND U.S. PERSONNEL IN HONDURAS.

-- THE GON ALSO REJECTS AS CATEGORICALLY FALSE THE STATEMENT THAT THE GON SUPPORTS, HAS INFLUENCE OVER, OR SHARES RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY ACTIONS BY HONDURAN TERRORISTS.

-- NEVERTHELESS, FOR THE SAKE OF COOPERATING WITH ANYTHING HAVING TO DO WITH THE STRUGGLE AGAINST TERRORISM, THE GON IS AGREEABLE TO MEETING IMMEDIATELY WITH THE CORRESPONDING AUTHORITIES OF THE USG IN THE SECURITY AREA IN ORDER TO LEARN IN DETAIL THE BASIS ON WHICH THE ACCUSATIONS ARE FOUNDED, AND TO SEE HOW THE

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USG THINKS THE GON COULD COOPERATE ON THIS ISSUE.

-- LASTLY, THE AIDE MEMOIRE EXPRESSES THE "PROFOUND CONCERN" OF THE GON IN THE FACE OF THE "ACCUSATIONS AND THREATS" FROM THE USG AT A TIME WHEN THE NICARAGUAN ELECTORAL PROCESS IS COMING TO A CLOSE. IT GOES ON TO ALLEGE THAT CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE CONTRAS, ENCOURAGED BY THE CIA, ARE TRYING TO SABOTAGE THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. FINALLY, THE AIDE MEMOIRE CLAIMS THAT CONTRA ELEMENTS MIGHT BE UTILIZED TO FABRICATE ATTACKS BY HONDURAN GROUPS, WITH THE OBJECT OF BLAMING NICARAGUA.

4. AFTER READING THE NON-PAPER, CHARGE OPENED BY ASKING WITH WHOM THE GON WOULD LIKE TO MEET. D'ESCOTO SAID SUCH A MEETING COULD BE WITH THE MFA OR WITH LENIN CERNA OF THE DGSE. CHARGE WENT ON TO SAY THERE WERE NO THREATS CONTAINED IN OUR DEMARCHE OF FEBRUARY 5. D'ESCOTO REPLIED THAT HOLDING THE GON RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTS OF A TERRORIST GROUP IS A THREAT. CHARGE SAID THAT WE DO NOT MAKE DEMARCHES UNLESS WE ARE CERTAIN OF OUR INFORMATION. HE THEN REPEATED WHAT HE TOLD CORDERO THE DAY BEFORE -- THAT THE USG HAS SOLID INFORMATION OF NICARAGUAN TIES TO THE CHINCHONEROS AND OTHERS. D'ESCOTO DENIED ANY GON TIES TO THESE GROUPS, ADDING THAT THE GON IS STILL DISPOSED TO COOPERATE. HE THEN LOOKED AT TINOCO AND SAID HE HADN'T HEARD OF THE CHINCHONEROS SINCE A PLANE HIJACKING SOME SIX YEARS AGO. CHARGE PRESSED, ASKING IF THE SANDINISTA PARTY HAD ANY CONTACTS WITH THESE GROUPS. AGAIN D'ESCOTO SAID NO. THEN YOU HAVE NOT COMMUNICATED WITH THESE GROUPS REGARDING OUR CONCERNS, THE CHARGE WENT ON? D'ESCOTO INDICATED THAT THE GON HAD NOT/NOT SO COMMUNICATED.

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5. CHARGE THEN SAID OUR REQUEST TO THE GON WAS THAT IT TALK TO THESE GROUPS. BY THE END OF THE MEETING D'ESCOTO APPEARED TO AGREE TO DO SOMETHING ON THIS SCORE, AND TOLD TINOCO AND CORDERO TO TALK "TO THE COMMANDANTE" ABOUT THIS.

6. CHARGE THEN TOLD D'ESCOTO THAT THE CLAIMS WITH REGARD TO THE CONTRAS IN THE GON'S AIDE MEMOIRE WOULD COMPLICATE MATTERS RATHER THAN HELP. D'ESCOTO THEN SPENT SOME TIME TRYING TO EXPLAIN THAT POINT FOUR OF THE AIDE MEMOIRE WAS A GENERIC PARAGRAPH EXPRESSING THE GON'S CONCERNS, AND THAT THE GON WAS NOT LINKING FURTHER DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE THREATS TO U.S. PERSONNEL TO THE CONTRA ISSUE.

7. CONTINUING TO PRESS THE ISSUE, CHARGE SAID THAT IT APPEARED THAT THE GON WAS NOT GIVING U.S. CONCERNS THE SAME ATTENTION THAT IT DID LAST NOVEMBER WHEN WE ASKED THAT THEY TELL THE FMLN TO NOT GO AFTER U.S. PERSONNEL IN EL SALVADOR DURING THEIR OFFENSIVE. HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT THE U.S. HOPES THE GON WILL FIND A WAY TO RELAY OUR CONCERNS THIS TIME AS WELL.

8. WE ARE TRANSMITTING THE FULL SPANISH TEXT OF THE

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GON AIDE MEMOIRE BY SEPTTEL.

9. COMMENT AND ACTION RECOMMENDATION: ON THE ONE HAND, THE FACT THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER REPLIED TO OUR REQUEST SHOWS THAT WE GOT THE GON'S ATTENTION. ON THE OTHER HAND, HIS INSOLENT LANGUAGE AND SPURIOUS CLAIMS SUGGEST THAT THERE IS LITTLE UTILITY IN PURSUING FURTHER DISCUSSIONS, ESPECIALLY WITH THE DGSE, WHICH WOULD TRY TO FIND OUT OUR SOURCES AND FEED US DISINFORMATION. WE SHOULD REPLY TO THIS AIDE MEMOIRE BY REPEATING OUR REQUEST, BY STATING SPECIFICALLY WHAT GROUPS WE UNDERSTAND ARE PLANNING ATTACKS AGAINST US, AND BY INDICATING THAT THE UNFOUNDED CLAIMS IN THE GON AIDE MEMOIRE INDICATE THAT A MORE EXTENDED DISCUSSION OF THE MATTER WOULD NOT BE FRUITFUL AT THIS TIME.

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a  
\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* ~~SECRET~~

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